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GROWTH

## SFT Outcomes 2021/22

### Demonstrating progress with impact

#### PRIMARY OUTCOME

06

**INNOVATIVE CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY WITH INCREASED  
PRODUCTIVITY, HIGH-QUALITY  
AND FAIR WORK**

#### SECONDARY OUTCOMES

05 09



## hub Programme supporting Building for Growth



The hub Programme is a Scotland-wide partnership that's been running for more than 12 years and is managed by SFT. The focus of the hub Programme is to bring public sector bodies together with a private sector partner to form what is known as a hubCo, that jointly plans, builds and manages community infrastructure projects, such as schools, health centres and civic buildings across five geographic territories.

From the outset of the hub Programme, there has been a contractual requirement for hubCos to engage with and support local SMEs in the development and delivery of infrastructure projects.

The construction industry is made up of a substantial number of relatively small companies to work collectively to deliver major community infrastructure projects. Increasingly, procuring authorities want these businesses,



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micro and SME, to be based locally. However, it is also understood that many of them do not have either the necessary commercial capabilities, the experience or the capacity to deliver construction packages within these hub projects.

In addition, research into the construction industry has shown that many micro and small businesses had limited digital skills which were proving to be a significant barrier to business success. And whilst funding was available to develop initiatives to bridge digital skill gap, a means of raising the awareness of this funding with the target group was needed.

To advance support for SMEs, SFT's hub Programme Management Office (PMO) developed a social value model. This allows procuring authorities to set out their community benefit and socio-economic targets at the start of the project development process. For example, the authority can determine the creation of local jobs or apprenticeships by the project before it is procured.

The hub South West Business Development Programme provides support, guidance and mentoring to SMEs at no cost to them. This increases their ability to participate in the large-scale projects which the hub Programme delivers. The support enhances the local supply chain skills, creating more employment opportunities and retaining money within the local economy.

The hub PMO's initial liaison with the hub South West Supply Chain Development Team established that that an effective route to SMEs could be provided, through the network of hub South West Tier 1 contractors.

Working with the consultant appointed to deliver the CITB funded project, the hub PMO and hub South West developed a delivery strategy. Meetings with the Tier 1 Contractors identified digital skills barriers which were preventing smaller suppliers from developing their business' success.

During this process, it also became apparent that there was a lack of knowledge of the funding available to businesses, in respect of digital training. To address this, a grant finder was developed, which enabled SMEs to identify and access digital skills funding, training and mentoring.

To date 168 local companies in the hub South West territory have 'graduated' from the Building for Growth programme which consists of eight learning / networking events provided free of charge. And over the past year, 299 local companies have benefited from attending hub South West business development events.

In terms of augmenting digital skills, the document entitled "Funding and Business Support Available to Construction Companies in Scotland" has been published and made widely available across the construction Industry.